



Lorraine and Al celebrate sixty years of wedded bliss with their “Aruban family.”

The Red Parrot Restaurant at the Divi Mega All Inclusive Resort has been a popular spot for anniversary celebrations this past week. Part of the reason, aside from its delightful surroundings, is that those celebrating have been long time visitors to Aruba, with the resort their favorite place to stay while on the island.

So it was on this past Saturday evening for Lorraine and Al Podrat of Bayside, Queens, who also had joining them for their sixtieth wedding anniversary two islanders who they consider to be “family.” They have been so close with Assistant Resort Manager Ying Tee Held, and Janet Arrindell since their first visit, thirty years ago, that it wouldn’t have been a celebration without them.

Like many that have been married this long, Lorraine and Al’s is a story of his returning from World War II, and the couple marrying soon after. They had been high school sweethearts, and he nearly lost his life after seeing action in Germany, France and Belgium whilst serving in the U.S. Army during the war. The quick action of doctors in a hospital in France saved his life, though he nearly lost his legs due to frostbite, and had to spend six weeks under their care.

Al returned to his hometown in the Bronx, New York in April of 1946, and they would have married immediately, except Lorraine’s father insisted they wait until she was eighteen, and they respected that, delaying their wedding until December of that year.

Since 1976, the Podrats have been coming to Aruba every January, increasing the time they stay over the years, so now they are on the island for three weeks. Over the years, they shared that time with a grandson they couldn’t bear to leave, and particularly relish the friendships they have made on the island. “You have probably heard it before, but it is so true,” expressed Al, “we come here to be with the wonderful, warm-hearted people we have met over the years, ever since we started staying at the Tamerijn, they have always treated us like royalty, and sincerely, from their hearts.”

Lorraine displayed just how deeply she felt about her Aruban friends when Janet Arrindel walked into the restaurant, a special surprise arranged for them by the Divi staff. She leapt from her seat to give Janet a warm hug, so pleased to see her join them for dinner. Janet worked the front desk at the Tamerijn when the Podrats first began to visit Aruba annually, and “and I can’t tell you how good she was to us,” declared Janet.

When they reminisce about their years on the island, Lorraine and Al talk about all the good friends they have made and look forward to seeing every year, both island residents and repeat visitors like themselves. They have been recipients of both “Distinguished Visitors” and Ambassadors of Good Will” Awards. A treasured memento of their years vacationing in Aruba, which resides in a special place on their bookshelf back home, is a ceramic of an open book, presented to them by Astrid Muller, now General Manager of the Divi Phoenix Resort, during their twenty-fifth year on Aruba. The last line of the inscription reads, “You will be in our hearts until you return,” and Lorraine and Al concur, Aruba and their good friends are always in their hearts during the year, until they return.

Congratulations to Lorraine and Al from the staff of THE NEWS for many wonderful years together. May you continue to be in all our hearts as treasured guests to Aruba for many years to come!